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realized? But it does furnish a most ironic commentary upon pacifism—which is the mistaking of an ideal for a reality. The irony of the rise of Prussianism, as a commentary upon pacifism, Mr. Bigelow very tellingly expresses.

THE OLD FREEDOM. By Francis Neilson. New York: B. W. Huebsch.

Drawing largely upon English history for facts, quoting liberally from the histories of Stubbs, Freeman, and Green, and even from Taine's justly celebrated *History of English Literature*, Mr. Neilson seeks to establish the thesis that the salvation of society depends upon an immediate return to first principles—principles long ignored and now almost forgotten. "While science," he declares, "must go always forward, adding to its data and developing its process, in politics the tendency must be backward, back to true democracy."

To the support of this contention, the recent philosophical thinkers, as well as the somewhat less up-to-date historians are made to contribute. "There are three men in particular who have revealed to us in recent years the probability of a new era, or rather the return to the best of an old era." These men are Henri Bergson, Franz Oppenheimer, and Dr. Nicolai, author of *The Biology of War*. Bergson "has swept away all the lumber of the latter-day Spencer." In the light of his philosophy, it would appear, one may perceive that the report of the Whitley Commission, with its suggestion of a cautious evolution toward industrial democracy, is simply a piece of weak, old-fashioned, evolutionary policy. It looks to a slow, forward movement, whereas the true progress should be both backward and sudden. Franz Oppenheimer, holding a high position as an economist in the University of Berlin, has written "undoubtedly the most learned, the most thorough analytical treatise of the growth of the State," and has "revealed a desire to return to first principles." As for Dr. Nicolai, he has shown on biological principles the folly of German State Socialism and of German militarism, and he has preached a philosophy eminently sane and sound—except that its only basis is biology.

What is the proposition to which this rather oddly assorted list of thinkers are made—perhaps unwittingly—to lend their support, either as opponents of socialism or as advocates of first principles? In about seven pages at the end of his book, Mr. Neilson reveals the secret: the way of social and political salvation lies through the taxation of the full monopoly value of land.

The proposition that the state should take monopoly values, giving community-created values to the community and to the individual the full value of his product, is not wholly new. In fact, it has been a good deal discussed. One realizes, of course, that quite a strong case can be made out for it. But surely it has never before been advocated in just this way.

TWELVE MEN. By Theodore Dreiser. New York: Boni and Liveright.

Certain readers who care more for literature than for realism

may possibly be surprised that the author of *Sister Carrie*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and other titanic works, should write so pointedly and so pregnantly as Mr. Dreiser has done in *Twelve Men*. The narratives in this latest book of his—narratives that are at the same time artfully developed short-stories and conversationally told character sketches—do not, to be sure, lack realism. They are thoroughly unconventional, and they are true. They have also the superficial traits of speaking with little delicacy about sex and of quoting profanity exactly. But thorough unconventionality—to say nothing of the superficial traits—is a virtue. And the stories are not—thank Heaven!—realistic in the sense of being tediously and majestically true to fact: they do not tell at merciless length what may be known just as well through epitome, through sample, or through suggestion. Nor do they contain merely a grain of imagination hidden away in a wagon-load of the hay, wood, stubble of experience. On the contrary in these tales Mr. Dreiser's imagination actively interprets life, interprets it with that reserve, that skepticism which—rather than delight in the raw material of human existence—is the mark of intelligent realism.

Verily, "what a piece of work is man"! Life is ever so much bigger and more interesting than conventional morality, conventional sentiment, conventional romance—such is the excellent reaction produced upon the mind by Mr. Dreiser's sketches of such men as "Peter," the bohemian artist, thinker, and practical joker, to whom *home life* was, after all, the ultimate reality; "Paul Dresser," the author's brother who was the composer of "Just Tell Them that You Saw Me" and "On the Banks of the Wabash"; "Culhane, the Solid Man" (Muldoon), who at his sanatorium has put into practise a system of athletic morals and of moral strenuousness that is a criticism of life no less telling and no less enjoyable than is the grotesque irony of a Carlyle; "X," the one-time millionaire—one respects the author's delicacy about revealing his true name—who, having achieved affluence by a combination of the virtue preached by Samuel Smiles and the masterful shrewdness celebrated in novels about big business, developed—not high moral character or respectability—but a certain sincerity and romantic grandeur of soul.

No one, it may be said, has drawn with more truth, with more genuine humor, or with more genuine reverence for the mystery of human personality, than has Mr. Dreiser such so-called "types" as the country doctor, the Irish contractor, the religious enthusiast. All the men in the author's gallery of obscure or conspicuous notables impress one deeply by their inexplicable force, and puzzle one by the variety of their ideals and standards.

No mature and open-minded person, whether interested simply in human beings, or, like "Culhane," in the history of morals, should miss reading these realistic, and intimately realized, sketches.